

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 16

By Overbey

A RESOLUTION designating May 17, 2017, as "Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) Awareness Day" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, in September 2016, the Centers for Disease Control announced that brain tumors have become the leading cause of childhood cancer death, surpassing leukemia; and

WHEREAS, of malignant brain tumors, Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) is the second most common among children, and it is the leading cause of childhood death due to brain tumors; and

WHEREAS, DIPGs are highly aggressive and difficult to treat brain tumors found at the base of the brain; they arise from the brain's glial tissue, which consists of cells that support and protect the brain's neurons; and

WHEREAS, these tumors are found in an area of the brainstem called the pons, which controls many of the body's most vital functions, such as breathing, blood pressure, and heart rate; and

WHEREAS, children with DIPG often exhibit signs of facial weakness, abnormal eye movement, loss of muscle control, difficulty walking, imbalanced limb movement, trouble chewing or swallowing, hearing issues, insomnia, loss of bladder or bowel control, trouble breathing, nausea, and headaches; and

WHEREAS, while these children lose control of most of their bodily functions, they still retain the ability to comprehend their situation; ultimately, children with DIPG fail to breathe or their hearts stop beating; and

WHEREAS, these tumors are highly aggressive and grow rapidly; DIPG symptoms appear quickly and are often misdiagnosed; and

WHEREAS, the causes of DIPG are unknown; current research suggests that these tumors are not the result of environmental factors or heredity; and

WHEREAS, while there is no known cause of DIPG, there is also no known cure; and

WHEREAS, approximately 300 children are diagnosed with DIPG each year, usually between the ages of five and nine; and

WHEREAS, at this time, a DIPG diagnosis is tantamount to a death sentence. This cancer has a zero percent survival rate, as no child who has ever been diagnosed with DIPG has survived long after diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, most children diagnosed with DIPG survive for only nine months after diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, DIPG is a devastating childhood cancer that has tragic consequences for the young lives of which it seizes hold, and it is imperative that more attention be brought to this disease; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby designate May 17, 2017, as "Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG) Awareness Day," seeking both to recognize those lives that have been touched by DIPG and to bring attention to the disease so that more may be done to care for these children and to find a cure.